

Driving Change: Transportation Services Strives to Make Progress on Budget and Improve Services



You have probably seen them around campus. Shuttle buses touting the UC San Diego Health System with messages such as “Home for Your Heart” and “We ♥ Patients.” The creative wraps are part of Transportation Services’ new bus advertising program and are just one of the many changes currently underway.

“We are working extremely hard to find new ways to reduce our costs, increase efficiency and improve our services,” said Robert Holden, director of Auxiliary Business Services, which oversees Transportation Services at UC San Diego. “Through outreach to the campus community over the last year, we’ve received some great feedback from our customers, such as the bus advertising idea. We continue to explore every avenue to find the best possible path to financial viability.”

Over the years, Transportation Services has played a significant role in transforming UC San Diego into an award-winning campus for sustainability. But, as a result of increased usage of alternative transportation, the department's costs for funding transit and shuttle programs has increased dramatically, while incoming revenue from parking has decreased.

"As a self-supporting department we don't receive any state funds or revenue from student fees," said Holden. "We must act if we are to ensure that we can continue to provide essential services to the campus community."

The additional income generated by the bus advertising program has been a welcome boon, paying for one of the four new buses that began serving campus last quarter. The new buses offer improved access for wheel chairs and more reliable service, resulting in significant reduction in repair, maintenance and operational costs. They are expected to meet the campus's needs until trolley service comes to UC San Diego sometime in 2019.

Transportation Services is also exploring new innovations and re-thinking current practices. Thanks to one-time funding, the department is testing two new technologies on campus: Parking space availability display and license plate recognition.

According to Holden, parking space availability display will be tested at the Gilman Parking structure beginning in fall 2014. Sensors will be placed in each parking spot and electronic signs outside the structure will indicate the availability of parking spaces.

"This technology will do more than save customers time and frustration," said Holden. "It has the added benefit of helping to reduce greenhouse gases because cars won't need to circle around the structure searching for spaces."

License plate recognition technology will be tested in place of printed permits. Transportation Services vehicles and staff will be equipped with the appropriate sensors and cameras, enabling them to scan license plates rather than check for permits. Up to five different license plates can be associated with one permit which gives customers the flexibility to change cars if necessary. The technology is currently in a pilot phase but once implemented throughout campus, it is expected to help save \$50,000-\$60,000 a year in permit printing costs.

Occasional Use Permits, a 10-day pass, have also been re-designed in a new "scratcher" format that allows customers to scratch off the days they will need to park on campus. The new permits are valid for a year whereas the old permits expired every quarter. The new design, which is already in use, will save customers time as well as result in reduced operational costs.

The department is also enhancing self-service capabilities online and is seeking funding for core services that benefit the entire campus, yet are paid for solely by Transportation Services. These services include the ADA Transport Program, which provided 70,000 rides in fiscal year 2012-2013,

and the Alternative Transportation Program, which includes subsidies for vanpools, MTS Regional Pass and Zimride as well as parking incentives for the Coaster and Pedal Clubs.

Transportation Services has connected with groups across campus through town halls and meetings to share progress and gather feedback.

“We have been reaching out to everyone—students, faculty, staff, patients, visitors, bike riders, bus riders and more,” said Holden. “We want to ensure that the needs of all members of the campus community are met.”

Customers can offer feedback or ask questions via email at telltps@ucsd.edu. For information on interior/exterior bus advertising, email BusAds@ucsd.edu. For more information on changes underway at Transportation Services, visit [Move UC San Diego](#).

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